





VARIOLOID, OR SMALL POX, IN WASHINGTON.

MARCH 27, 1828.

Read, and laid upon the table.

MR. ALEXANDER, from the Committee for the District of Columbia, to which the subject had been referred, made the following

REPORT:

*The Committee for the District of Columbia, to which was referred a resolution instructing them to inquire into the propriety of taking efficient measures for checking the further progress of a contagious disease, known to exist within the precincts of the Corporation of Washington, and whether this disease be, as it is sometimes called, varioloid, or real small pox, report :*

That, by an act of Congress, full power has been vested in the Corporation of Washington to establish a Board of Health, and make all regulations that may be necessary to prevent the introduction of contagious diseases, and for the preservation of health, generally. In pursuance of this power, a Board of Health has been constituted, with competent authority over the subject; to whom, as well as the Mayor of the City, the Committee directed their inquiries. It appears, from the information received, that the disease which has shewn itself, is the varioloid, or modified form of *small pox*, milder in its character, and, consequently, less dangerous than the natural small pox, though equally contagious. The existing cases are seven in number, and reported to be not of a malignant kind. One of them is in the City, whose situation did not admit of a removal; but every necessary precaution has been taken to guard against the infection. The others have been placed in a temporary hospital without the limits, or are so entirely insulated, as to leave no fears about the farther spread of the disease. In addition to the measures already adopted, a general course of vaccination has been recommended and pursued, as well calculated to prevent its contagious influence.

The committee are of opinion that the city authorities are sufficiently competent to do all that may be required of them on the occasion, and are assured that no exertions on their part will be wanting to check the progress of the disease. For greater security, however, they would recommend an entire separation of the persons infected from the populous part of the city, which is believed to be their intention; and preparations are making with that view. Seeing the neces-



sity of the case, and the ill provided means of the District to arrest diseases of this character, the committee will take this opportunity of drawing the attention of the House to a bill now before it, proposing to establish a Lazaretto for the District of Columbia : a measure that recommends itself to the consideration of Congress, by every regard for their own safety, as well as that of the citizens, against infectious or contagious diseases ; and, if adopted, would, in a great degree, remove the alarm and uneasiness that must necessarily be felt on such occasions. The Committee submit the information communicated by the President of the Board of Health, and the Mayor ; and ask to be discharged from the further consideration of the subject.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

March 25, 1828.

SIR : I am instructed by the Committee for the District of Columbia, to request that you will inform them of the character of the disease (said to be contagious) that has lately made its appearance in Washington, its extent, and what measures, if any, have been adopted, by removal of the patients or otherwise, to check its progress.

I am, with respect,

Your obedient servant,

M. ALEXANDER.

To the President of the Board of Health,  
Washington City.

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WASHINGTON, March 25, 1828.

SIR : There are seven cases of *varioid* disease in this city ; two situated in a small building near the Penitentiary ; one in E street, near the Telegraph Office ; and four in hospital, in the north part of the city, remote from population.

The Board of Health have prohibited all intercourse with the infected, except by persons important to the comforts of the sick ; and those are not permitted to mingle with the citizens, with the exception of the attending physicians. A general vaccination is practised, and every other precaution used to prevent its progress.

The *varioid* disease is a modified form of small pox, and arises in persons whose constitutions have been imperfectly influenced by the small pox or cow pock. It is more mild and more superficial than the small pox, and, therefore, less dangerous.

I have the honor to be,

With high respect, &c.

Your obedient servant,

HENRY HUNTT,

Pres't Board of Health.

Hon. M. ALEXANDER,

Chairman Com. for the District of Columbia.



MAYOR'S OFFICE, WASHINGTON,

March 26, 1828.

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SIR: I have the honor to state, in reply to your inquiry as to what measures have been adopted by the City Authorities for preventing the spread of the varioloid disease within our limits, that a hospital has been established, in the out-skirts of the city, remote from the inhabited part of it. to which the patients at the Poor House, (itself distant from the populated part of the city) have been removed, and to which all other cases will be removed, should any occur, except such as are already sufficiently isolated; that all intercourse with the sick, except by the nurses and medical attendants, has been strictly forbidden, under adequate penalties, whether at the Hospital or elsewhere; that all new cases are reported at the Mayor's Office; and that, according to my present information, the number of cases, out of our whole population of nearly twenty thousand souls, does not exceed eight. I feel confident that the measures which have been taken, together with the very general vaccination which has been resorted to, will not only check the disease for the present, but will also prove important guards against its invasions hereafter.

Should the disease, however, not be immediately rooted out, I beg leave to assure the committee that every exertion will be made to carry into effect any further measures whatever, which may be recommended by the intelligent physicians and other responsible citizens who compose the Board of Health.

With great respect,

I have the honor to be,

Your most ob't serv't,

JO. GALES, Jr. Mayor.

Hon. MARK ALEXANDER,

Chairman Committee for the District Columbia.



